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AMERICAN SLAVERY,

ESSENTIALLY SINFUL:

A SERMON;

BY

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OF

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American Slavery

ESSENTIALLY SINFUL.

BY

REV. S. W. STREETER.

"All unrighteousness is sin."—JOHN 5: 17.

SLAVERY exists, and is either right or wrong. It is not unreasonable to suppose that we may, without difficulty, determine what its moral character is. Its fundamental principles are easily stated, and their practical application and legitimate results are equally obvious. Its moral elements are neither subtle nor hidden; its results are before the sun.

Ministers and churches should not seek to pass by this question in silence. It involves in it the rights of God and of the human race. It affects the glory of Jehovah and the eternal, not less than the temporal interests of man. The friends of God cannot with moral propriety occupy neutral ground while every attribute of His unalterably determines His position upon one side. Where God is, his friends should be.

Ministers have on this subject weighty duties to discharge. Upon all questions which involve the prerogatives of God, the rights and eternal interests of man, minister's lips should keep and dispense knowledge. They should be first to perceive what is right, and quick to detect and expose what is wrong. This is their office. They are commissioned from above, sustained and rewarded for the faithful discharge of this important and imperative duty. Their hearts should be in unison with God's, their ears open to the cries of the oppressed, their hands stretched out for their relief. "They are God's ministers, attending continually upon these things."

Till recently, Slavery has not only been lamented as an evil, but it has been, in unmeasured terms, denounced and abhorred as a *crime*. It was held to be wrong in principle and

wrong in practice. In the common apprehension it was held to be a flagrant violation of the law of love, a positive denial of essential and inalienable human rights. All classes, from the holy man at the altar to the profane demagogue, uttered their bitter denunciations against it, and held it to be the sworn foe of God and man. The community at large, a few years since, would as soon have anticipated the attempt to prove the Devil to be a Saint at heart as Slavery to be innocent in principle. Was this prejudice, or was it the voice of reason and conscience—the uttered language of our common nature ?

A change has since come over the public mind. Many now defend Slavery as *right* in principle and a *blessing* in practice. More apologize for it, and maintain that under existing circumstances it is not necessarily unrighteousness. More still refuse to take that action against it which would imply its essential sinfulness. The leading Ministers at the South hold the relation between Slaveholder and Slave to be in itself an innocent one. In this position they are supported by Prof. Stuart of Andover, and Prof. Hodge of Princeton, Dr. Spring of New York City, Graham of Ohio, and Junkin of Pennsylvania, and other ministers at the North too numerous to mention.

The highest ecclesiastical bodies of the most numerous and influential denominations have, as far as my information extends, refused to consider the subject of Slavery at all, or after deliberation have, by decided majorities, declined calling it in its own nature, and necessarily, sinful. In confirmation of the above remark, I will refer the reader to the deliberate votes and acts of the New School General Assembly, the Old School General Assembly, the Protestant Episcopal General Convention, and the regular Baptist General Conference, at the last meetings of these bodies. The action of the last General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church has seriously disturbed the Slave Power. It is doubtless the *heaviest* ecclesiastical blow which that overgrown evil has for many years received. It is just also to remark that some of the discussion which preceded and paved the way for final action, was able, solid, and eminently Christian. It cheered the hearts and strengthened the hands of Christian abolitionists throughout the land. But I add with grief that many of the arguments on that memorable occasion were based, not upon the immovable rock of right, but upon the sand of expediency. It was inexpedient

for a *Methodist Bishop* to be a Slave-holder ; not that it involved guilt in private members voluntarily to remain such ! That so many of that large and respectable body felt and urged that it was wrong and inexpedient to fellowship Slave-holders whether Bishops or members, is a source of devout thanksgiving. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions have been urged till they seem to be weary and impatient under the importunity, to declare Slavery to be *sinful* ; but they have hitherto been urged in vain. They are the accredited agents of evangelical churches, whose duty it is to send the pure gospel to the unenlightened heathen—and they deem it foreign to their main design to determine whether man *may* or *may not*, with moral propriety, enslave his fellow ! If this question be foreign to the gospel of Jesus, it is so because the relation between Slave-holder and Slave is not sinful ; for that *gospel condemns* every thing that is.

Some small denominations, many subordinate ecclesiastical bodies, more individual churches, very many ministers, and a rapidly increasing number of members, *do hold* and *treat* Slavery as essential unrighteousness, wrong in its principles as well as in its practice, sin in root and branch. On which side is truth and righteousness ? On which error and oppression ? Is God *for* or *against* Slavery ?

As *all* unrighteousness is sin, he is opposed to every kind and degree of unrighteousness. The question is therefore a plain one. Does Slavery violate the *rights* either of man, or of God, or of both ? Does it do this in principle as well as in practice ? If so, it is always and essentially sinful.

What then is Slavery ? What is its essence, its life, its soul ? What is the *essential element* in the relation between Slaveholder and Slave ? It shall speak for itself. It shall define in words of its own selection its nature and attributes. If it be essential unrighteousness it shall be seen to be such by its own testimony ; not by any construction of ours. We must appeal to positive statute law to learn what this relation is ; for by the unanimous consent of the civilized world it has no foundation in nature. This is the decision of the law of nations, and of the common law. We must look therefore to local positive human enactments for the being and attributes of Slavery. The following quotations will develop its fundamental principles. “ A Slave is one who is in the power of his master to whom he belongs ; the master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry and his labor ; he can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire any thing, but what must belong

to his master." La. Civ. Code Art. 35. "All their issue and offspring born and to be born, shall be, and they are hereby declared to be and remain forever hereafter absolute slaves, and shall follow the condition of the mother." The above is slave law and usage in all our slaveholding States. We will elicit by cross-examination what the nature, and essential elements of slavery are.

Has your Slave, in your estimation, more than your horse or ox, a right to *wages*? No more, "He can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire any thing but what must belong to his master." Do you stipulate with your Slave any more than with your horse or ox in relation to the kind or degree of labor which he shall perform? No more. Has he still left to him the *right* to read the Bible? The privilege, as matter of special favor, is in a few instances granted; but his *right* to prefer and enforce his *claim* to do so is never conceded. Have Slaves the right peaceably to assemble and worship God agreeably to their own convictions of duty? The laws, and their owners invariably determine under what *restrictions* they may meet. The Slave's *right* to meet with his fellows to adore his Maker we never allow. Can he select his own religious teachers or ensure the observance of the Sabbath? Why vex me with these questions—The "*Slave is one who is in the power of his master to whom he belongs.*" Well then, do you allow them to marry and sustain the lawful relation of husband and wife? We allow them "*to take up*" with one another. What does that mean? Why that they may live together as man and wife while their owner or owners please. Have slave parents the *right* secured to them of providing for, protecting, and training their own offspring? They live with their children only during the pleasure of their masters. Why, many will say—why go through with this dull statement of admitted facts? Who needs be told these things for the thousandth time? I state them because many do not *seem* to see that the law which converts man into property, strips him of his *right* to himself—to wages—to read the Bible, to choose his religious teachers, to assemble with his fellows to worship God, and the right to protect, provide for, and train his children. The property principle, and no other, robs man of his manhood, and degrades him in respect to essential rights to the level of the brute, and clothes the master with despotic power. I state these things because Conferences and General Assemblies can see no necessary unrighteousness in the relation between Slaveholder and Slave. Because so great and good a man as Prof.

Stuart of Andover says, "The relation between Slaveholder and Slave—*"did exist"*—*"may exist."* The *abuse* of it is the essential and fundamental wrong."

Now Christian abolitionists on the other hand maintain that the relation between Slaveholder and Slave, is in its own nature sinful : that when it doeth unrighteousness, it doeth it of itself ; for it is unrighteousness and the father of it. Between them and all who say it *"may exist"*—the *abuse* of it is the essential and fundamental wrong," there is a heaven-wide difference—a difference of essential and fundamental principle. On which side is immortal truth and eternal rectitude ?

We maintain "that the laborer is worthy of his hire." This is the universal testimony of reason and conscience, as well as the express declaration of God. God has denounced a *woe* against "him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong ; *that useth his neighbor's service without wages,* and giveth him not for his work." The cry of the wronged laborer entereth into the ear of God, who will in due time vindicate his rights. "Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, *crieth* ; and the cries of them which have reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabbaoth." It is a principle settled in the government of God, and responded to by the unperverted judgment of the race, that when a man by skill or industry has earned something, he has acquired a rightful title to it.

Slavery denies its victim, the laborer, the ability to acquire rightful title to one cent's worth of property by a life's toil. "He can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire any thing, but what must belong to his master." The owner, in virtue of his relation as such, can claim all his earnings from childhood to hoary age. The Slave cannot in virtue of a life spent in wasting labor, prefer his right, and enforce his title to one dollar, though it were to smooth the passage of a beloved wife to the grave, or mitigate the sufferings of a dying child ! This is not an adventitious *abuse* of slavery, it is the development of its cardinal principle ; the slave and his earnings belong to his owner.

God says, the laborer is worthy of his hire ; Slavery in principle and in fact says the *owner* of the laborer is worthy of the laborer's hire. On this important subject where shall the Church and ministry take their stand—*with God, or with Slavery?* The issue is fairly joined and the providence and Spirit

of God alike forbid our attempt to occupy neutral ground.

Slaves are valuable only for their services. They are valuable only for present and future services and not for past. Slaves are valuable only as their services exceed the cost of keeping them. The estimated value of American Slaves is not less than twelve hundred millions of dollars. That is the estimated difference between their expenses and the profit of their services. How is this vast sum to be wrung from these poor laborers? It is to be exacted by force. The lash, the stocks, the iron collar, the chain and ball, and all the fiendish implements of torture which ingenuity, prompted by cupidity, hate, and dire revenge, can invent, are to be applied to the flesh of men, women, and children, laborers, for the purpose of extorting from them twelve hundred millions worth of service! The abettors, supporters, and advocates of the system which does all this openly, avowedly, and before the sun, are adjudged by the leading denominations in this land worthy of Church fellowship, and we are taught by ecclesiastical authority that this is good old fashioned orthodox righteousness. Now Christian abolitionists affirm that slavery is in its own nature wrong, because it asserts its *right* to do what as a matter of fact it does—*rob the laborer of his hire.*

Christian abolitionists also maintain that laborers, as well as others are entitled to the substantial protection of law against shameful and outrageous personal abuse. They hold that labor is honorable in all; that laboring men and women are in justice entitled to esteem, respect, and protection in person, reputation, and property. Let the supporters and abettors of slavery join issue with them on this ground if they choose. Let them boldly say that the laboring classes are entitled neither to the blessings of civil and religious liberty, nor to a just and fair compensation for their toil. The supporters and apologists of this dreadful system know that it exposes its victims without legal protection to the grossest personal outrages and abuses of which the human mind can conceive or human nature endure. The following unexceptionable testimony will give to our farmers, merchants, and mechanics, and all who prosecute an honest business for a livelihood, the *Bill of Rights* which slavery would grant them. The Presbyterian Synod of Kentucky, says:

“This system licenses and produces *great cruelty.*

“Mangling, imprisonment, starvation, every species of torture, may be inflicted upon him. (the slave,) and he has no redress.

“There are now in our whole land two millions of human beings, ex-

posed, defenceless, to every insult, short of maiming or death, which their fellow men may choose to inflict. *They suffer all that can be inflicted by wanton caprice, by brutal lust, by malignant spite, and by insane anger.* Their happiness is the sport of every whim, and the prey of every passion that may, occasionally, or habitually, infect the master's bosom. If we could calculate the amount of woe endured by ill-treated slaves, it would overwhelm every compassionate heart—it would move even the obdurate to sympathy. There is also a vast sum of suffering inflicted upon the slave by humane masters, as a punishment for that kind of idleness and misconduct which slavery naturally produces.

"Brutal stripes and all the varied kinds of personal indignities, are not the only species of cruelty which slavery licenses."

By the testimony of competent and impartial witnesses Slave laborers, male and female, have no legal protection against "brutal stripes and all the varied kinds of personal indignities."

Let our hard working men and women read for their edification and comfort the truthful statements which follow. They will learn to appreciate the services of those professed ministers of the gospel who speak smooth things about slavery; are too charitable to call it sinful: and too much absorbed in divine things to allow them to lift the tip of their fingers, "to undo heavy burdens," and do not wish to profane the Sabbath nor desecrate their high calling by preaching that "every yoke should be broken and that the oppressed should go free." Mrs. Weld, a brief extract of whose testimony I am about to introduce, is the daughter of the late Judge Grimké of the Supreme Court of South Carolina. She formerly resided in Charleston, and was an eye witness of Slavery as it exists in the most refined circles of that city. Her noble and disinterested efforts in behalf of the despised and suffering Slave justly place her among the first philanthropists of the age. She introduces us to a lady "of the highest respectability"—"foremost in every benevolent enterprise" and at the head of the religious circle in which she moved—and then among other things, says of her:

"This mistress would occasionally send her slaves, male and female, to the Charleston work-house to be punished. One poor girl, whom she sent there to be flogged, and who was accordingly stripped *naked* and whipped, showed me the deep gashes on her back—I might have laid my whole finger in them—*large pieces of flesh had actually been torn out by the torturing lash.* She sent another female slave there, to be imprisoned and worked on the tread-mill. The girl was confined several days, and forced to work the mill while in a state of suffering from another cause. For ten days or two weeks after her return, she was lame from the violent exertion necessary to enable her to keep the step on the machine. She spoke to me with intense feeling of the outrage up-

on her, as a *woman*. Her men-servants were sometimes flogged there ; and so exceedingly offensive has been the putrid flesh of their lacerated backs, for days after the infliction, that they would be kept out of the house—the smell arising from their wounds being too horrible to be endured. They were always stiff and sore for some days, and not in a condition to be seen by visitors."

Slavery, in its essential principles, divests laborers of all legal protection against these most horrid personal outrages—it deprives them of any legal redress for having suffered them ; but delivers over its hapless victims, bound hand and foot, to such torments ! And yet the high toned orthodoxy of the day underwrites for it and declares it worthy of church fellowship !

Mr. Bliss, whose testimony I shall now introduce, is a respectable member of the bar, and is personally known to the writer to be a man of moral worth and integrity. He went to Florida in 1834 for his health, and was witness of the scenes which he describes. He says :

"Of the extent and cruelty of the punishment of the slave, the northern public know nothing. From the nature of the case they can know little, as I have before mentioned.

"I have seen a woman, a mother, compelled, in the presence of her master and mistress, to hold up her clothes, and endure the whip of the driver on the naked body for more than *twenty minutes*, and while her cries would have rent the heart of any one, who had not hardened himself to human suffering, her master and mistress were conversing with apparent indifference. What was her crime ? She had a task given her of sewing which she must finish that day. Late at night she finished it ; but the *stitches were too long*, and she must be whipped. The same was repeated three or four nights for the same offence. I have seen a man tied to a tree, hands and feet, and receive 305 blows with the paddle on the fleshy parts of the body. Two others received the same kind of punishment at the time, though I did not count the blows. One received 230 lashes. Their crime was stealing mutton. I have frequently heard the shrieks of the slaves, male and female, accompanied by the strokes of the paddle or whip, when I have not gone near the scene of horror. I knew not their crimes, excepting of one woman, which was stealing *four potatoes* to eat with her bread ! The more common number of lashes inflicted was fifty or eighty ; and this I saw not once or twice, but so frequently that I cannot tell the number of times I have seen it. So frequently, that my own heart was becoming so hardened that I could witness with comparative indifference, the female writhe under the lash, and her shrieks and cries for mercy ceased to pierce my heart with that keenness, or give me that anguish which they first caused. It was not always that I could learn their crimes ; but of those I did learn, the most common was non-performance of tasks. I have seen men strip, and receive from one to three hundred strokes of the whip and paddle. My studies and meditations were almost nightly interrupted by the cries of the victims of cruelty and avarice."

The writer of this discourse received the following statement from Judge L., a native of Maryland, but now a citizen of this State : " Soon after I was settled in life," says he, " I went at the invitation of relatives, to visit a portion of Maryland, where the soil was more fertile than it was where I then resided. My cousin, in company with another person, had leased a large plantation in that section of the State. On my arrival at his house, I was informed that he was in a corn-field overseeing the Slaves. I went to the field, saluted him, and became a witness of his habits as a driver. He was *pushing* severely the whole gang of Slaves. If one fell a little behind the other he would *yell* at the delinquent with a savage voice. I particularly noticed an old female Slave who had more white hairs on her head than I have on mine—his locks were quite grey—who seemed to be enfeebled by age, and had to *scuffle hard* to keep up. Every little while he would yell out at this poor old woman who appeared to be doing her best to keep along with the others. In her hard struggle not to fall behind she overlooked some grass in one of the hills of corn. My cousin saw it, walked up to her, and with a knotted cane which he held in his hand, gave her a stroke over the head which instantly brought her upon her knees. She cried out and wept aloud in the piteous tones of childhood; and the tears streamed from her eyes; but she sprang almost instantly upon her feet and commenced working away with her hoe lest the blow should be repeated. I was filled with horror and disgust at the scene, and determined to take leave of my relative as soon as it was decent for me so to do, and what I then saw strengthened my purpose to abandon the Slave-holding States forever." That poor old woman had no protection against such barbarity; nor could she appeal to any earthly power to have such wrongs redressed: *for she was a Slave.*

Reader, have you a mother? Contemplate her as the honored matron of the mansion at home; then contemplate her as a *Slave!* Should the mother of those divines who say that Slavery is right, *disown* their unnatural offspring, they would stand justified by the common sentiment of the civilized world.

The abettors of Slavery cry out, These are *abuses* of the system. Say, then, shall Slavery wield its gory whip or no? If you reply '*it shall,*' then you take this horrid machine with the main-spring—*fear*—which was made for it and is adapted to it; and you take also its bloody enormities. If you say '*it shall not* wield the lash,' then you decided that the Slave-hold-

er is entitled to the Slave's services for life, together with the most profound submission which one human being can render to another ; but he must at the same time break off the cruel iron collar, lay aside the dripping lash, burn his paddles and hickories, break to pieces the torturing stocks, and work the engine of Slavery by the moral law, and the sweet breath of moral suasion. Such, however, is the affection of Slavery for its implements of torture that it would not survive their loss a single day !

As laborers are in justice entitled to protection in person as well as in property, that system is essentially unjust which deprives them of protection in both.

Slavery, in principle and in fact, annihilates the marriage relation. It knows no man as husband, no woman as wife. It enjoins no duties, it confers no rights upon the parties that sustain this relation. No man who is a Slave can assert or maintain his right to cherish and protect the woman whom he calls his wife ; no Slave woman can assert and maintain her right to obey the man whom she calls her husband. Lawful wedlock, with its rights and duties, does not exist among our entire Slave population.

The testimony of an esteemed personal friend, Rev. Wm. T. Allan, formerly of Huntsville, Ala., will give a clear view of what is law and fact on this subject. He says, "legal marriage is unknown among the Slaves. They sometimes have a marriage form, generally *none at all*. The pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Ala., had two families of Slaves when I left there. One couple were married by a negro preacher—the man was robbed of his wife a number of months afterwards by her 'owner.' The other couple just 'took up together' without any form of marriage. They are both members of churches—the man a Baptist deacon, sober and correct in his deportment. They have a large family of children—all children of concubinage—living in a minister's family." While Prof. Andrews resided some years since in Carolina, he says, "an old negro came to me one day, weeping so immoderately that for some time I could not clearly ascertain the cause of his distress. Peter had just then heard that his wife's master was about to sell her to a speculator." The Professor sought to console him, when he replied—"This is my *third* wife ; both of my other wives were sold to speculators, and were carried to the South, and I have never heard from them since." Truly have the Savannah (Ga.) River Baptist Association said, while speaking on this subject, "The

Slaves are not free moral agents, and a dissolution [of the marriage covenant] *by death*, is not more entirely without their consent and beyond their control, than by such separation."

Slavery, in principle, denies to the Slave the right to provide for his wife, defend her person from the grossest conceivable insult, or prevent a final separation at the pleasure of the lawful master. If it be consistent with righteousness to prohibit marriage, then is Slavery in this respect right; but if it be essentially wrong to make such prohibition, then is Slavery essentially wrong—sin in its very nature. In the estimation of the Old School General Assembly, at its recent meeting in Cincinnati, that land must be a polluted one, where a widower is permitted to marry the sister of his deceased wife; but that church retains its vestal purity which fellowships American Slavery, which renders lawful marriage impossible, encourages and sanctions, if it does not necessitate, a system of indiscriminate fornication, and adultery.

Slavery not only destroys the rights of husbands and wives, but it also divests parents and children of their respective rights. If the parent has any right, it is the right to protect and provide for his own offspring. If he has any duty as a parent, it is to train his children to habits of industry, virtue, and piety. God has invested parents with rights, and has enjoined upon them sacred duties. Slavery enters within the sacred enclosure of the family, not to respect the rights and obligations subsisting between parents and children, but to profane and destroy them. The child may pine away with hunger, be fed with unwholesome food at unseasonable hours, or have clothing insufficient for health or decency, but neither father nor mother, how valuable soever their services may be, has a *right* to interfere to render the sufferer comfortable. The child may be sold into distant and hopeless bondage at the option of the owner and against the tears and prayers of broken hearted parents. The deliberate declaration of the Pres. Synod of Kentucky, in 1835, should be regarded as unexceptionable testimony on this subject. They say, "Brothers and sisters, parents and children, husbands and wives, are separated and *permitted to see each other no more*. These acts are of daily occurrence in the midst of us. The shrieks and agony often witnessed on such occasions proclaim with trumpet tongue the iniquity of our system. There is not a neighborhood where these heart-rending scenes are not displayed. There is not a village or road that does not behold the sad procession of manacled out-casts, whose mournful countenances

ces tell that they are exiled *by force* from all their hearts hold dear."

"A gentleman in the interior part of this State," says my informant, "was travelling in Western Virginia, and approaching the Ohio River. Towards evening he overtook a company of Slave children under the charge of a Slave-driver. The company consisted of between twenty and thirty, and their ages, he judged, ranged from six to twelve. They had been torn from their homes, their feet were sore, they were fatigued with their journey, and many of them were weeping bitterly. He rode slowly, contemplating the sad spectacle before him, as long as his heart could endure it, and then hastened on his way. He put up for the night in a village on the Virginia side of the Ohio River. In due time the slave gang which he had passed arrived before the tavern, and the driver came in to see if he could obtain quarters for himself and negro children for the night. The land-lord was absent and he applied to the land-lady. "Madam," says he, "can you accommodate me and my gang of little niggers to-night?" "No," says she, promptly, "we don't keep *soul-drivers here*." She went, however, to the door, and saw the group of weeping children: "O," says she, "I can take care of those suffering children, while I **ABHOR** the one who has charge of them." It was understood that these Slave children were destined to form an appendage to a large hotel in the city of Natchez, to be fed upon the refuse fragments of the public table, till they were of age and size to be 'broken in' to work, or were ready for the market. Every one who on this subject can discern his right hand from his left, knows that the act which makes the parent property divests him of any power to prevent his beloved children from being sold as calves of the stall! American Slavery, in its essential and oft asserted principles, and in fact, robs parents and children of their most sacred rights; yet a fraction only of the American churches *call and treat* Slavery as essential unrighteousness. But thanks be to to God, we are not dependent upon ecclesiastical bodies to determine whether parents have a right to provide for and protect their children; and children the right to look to them for protection and support. This sentiment was never reasoned into us and can never be reasoned out of us. It is inwrought into our nature by the hand that made us. Our reason affirms it—our consciences approve it—our instincts proclaim it, and God by express revelation sanctions it. The system which annihilates these rights can but be accursed of God, and should be abhorred by men.

Slavery deprives man of his rights as a religious being. I do not design to say that no Slave is *permitted* to enjoy religious privileges. I cheerfully acknowledge every instance of this kind which does exist, and sincerely desire that such instances may be multiplied a thousand fold. What I do affirm is, that Slavery denies its victims the *right* to know and to do the will of God; or in other words, it denies them the first and most essential elements of religious liberty. God has given his word to man, a free gift to the race. *All* have right to this tree of life; *none* to the *exclusion* of others. The inherent right of each one to read God's word for himself, is as clear as it is to breathe His air, walk upon His earth, drink at the living fountains which spring up at his feet, or open his eyes upon the light of day. This sentiment is not peculiar to christian abolitionists; it is the boast and glory of protestant Christendom. It is an inheritance sealed ours by God, and consecrated by the blood of the martyred dead. The denial of this truth brands the pope as anti-Christ, and dooms him as the sworn foe of God. Slavery, in virtue of its inherent and essential attributes, assumes the right to say whether its victims *shall* or *shall not* have access to the Holy Bible. It interposes in its own name, and by its own authority, and at its sovereign pleasure, the iron arm of power between the Slave and the "precious Book divine." When it does this it does it of itself; it asks no foreign aid, it borrows no authority. Were it to search through the despotisms of earth which have defied God and crushed man, it could not find one element of outrageous wrong of which it is not already possessed—nor an element in its incipient state of which it does not possess the same in perfection. Slavery decides whether its victims may read the Bible, select their own religious teachers, hear preaching at all, enjoy even oral instruction, be permitted to hallow the sabbath, or assemble with their fellows to worship God. What now remains of religious liberty? What neither Slavery nor any other despotism can reach—the privilege of thinking their own thoughts in the closet of the soul, and of sending the secret aspirations of a cherished heart to God. As American Slavery, in principle and in fact, deprives man of essential and inalienable religious rights, it is in its own nature unrighteousness, and hence it is ever sinful.

Were not these things known, every one of them, by the New School General Assembly when at its last triennial session it refused, after deliberation and discussion, to call American Slavery essentially sinful? Is it not an unpardonable sin in

our Protestant eyes for the pope to do what every body knows that Slavery—church fellowshipped Slavery—not only does, but asserts its right and determination to continue to do ?

We hold Slavery to be essentially sinful, because it violates the rights of God.

God, as the Supreme Lawgiver of the universe requires each man to love his fellow as himself. This rule of duty is universal and always in force. It implies that the rights of my fellow men are as sacred as my own ; and that I am bound by the highest authority and most weighty sanctions to esteem and treat them so. Does Slavery violate the above law, or does it not ? It is not difficult to answer this question. By the common consent of the world the worst form of oppression known to man, is and ever *has been* Slavery. It selects, matures, and appropriates to itself every element of injustice found upon the broad field of human relations. Every man knows that the highest temporal injury which can be inflicted on him short of taking life, is, to be reduced with his posterity to the condition of personal bondage. As love worketh no ill to its neighbor, and as Slavery worketh *only* ill, it is a manifest repeal of the law of love, the fundamental law of God's empire, and the substitution of *Selfishness*, the essence of all sin, in its stead. God is also entitled to the consecrated talents and services of the entire race. He has a right to say to one "go" and to another "come." He has a right to employ as seemeth good to him, the powers of every human being in advancing the grand scheme of redeeming mercy. The denial of this right is to breast the current of Scripture testimony, and to wrest with traitorous hand the sceptre from Jehovah. American Slavery buries a nation of minds in gross ignorance, and binds their physical powers in chains. Though God endow the Slave with gifts and grace, and move him by his Spirit to make known the unsearchable riches of Christ, he can assert and maintain no right so to do. The Slaveholder's *will* comes between him and his God, and determines without hope of appeal this infinitely important question of personal duty.

I have attributed no power to the owner but that which he possesses in law, and in fact. The Pres. Synod of Ky. say, "Not only has the Slave no right to his wife and children, he has no right *even* to himself. His very body, his sinews, his bones, his flesh, are the property of another. The movements of his limbs are regulated by the will of another. He may be sold like the beast of the field; he may be transported

in chains like a felon." Says Judge Ruffin of North Carolina in a legal decision—"The power of the master must be *absolute*, to render the submission of the Slave *perfect*. It would not do to allow the right of the master to be brought into discussion in the courts of Justice. The Slave, to remain a Slave, must be sensible that there is *no appeal from his master*." The personal obedience of the Slave in relation to infinitely important duties is made in law, and in fact, to depend upon the will of his owner. As Slavery intercepts and annuls God's sovereign and rightful authority over his creatures, Christian abolitionists maintain that it is entirely wrong. God honors the laborer. Slavery dishonors him. God awards to the laborer his hire. Slavery strips him of it, and gives it over into the hands of his owner. God has conferred upon man religious and social rights, of which Slavery robs him and thus insults and condemns the original giver. But I forbear. Enough has been said to evince that Slavery in principle and in fact, robs God of his rights as supreme Lawgiver, and is therefore in its own nature unrighteousness, and hence sin. All unrighteousness is sin. Slavery is unrighteousness, and is therefore Sin.

Since American Slavery is essential unrighteousness, it follows that God does not sanction its fundamental principles any more than he sanctions its wicked deeds. We have seen that slavery denies God's rights as Supreme Lawgiver; is itself, in principle and in fact, the repeal of the law of love; overthrows the family state, constituted and consecrated by God; denies the laborer's right to his hire, and man's right to know and obey God according to the dictates of his own judgment and conscience: *all these things* we have shown to be legitimate fruits of the fundamental principle of slavery, namely, "That a slave is one who is in the power of the master to whom he belongs; the master may *sell him*, dispose of *his person*, his industry, and his labor; he can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire any thing, but what must belong to his master." Since the relation of Slaveholder and Slave, defined by words of its own choice does divest man of his manhood and of the essential and inalienable, civil, religious, and social rights which belong to him by nature, and subjects him, with the exception of taking life, to the laws and usages of property, it follows that God hates the unrighteous principles of Slavery not less than its cruel, heart rending, and bloody developments. He hates the fountain of iniquity not less than its streams; the root of sin not less than its fruit.

When God consents to the robbery of himself—when he consents to essential unrighteousness, and abominable impurity, he will give his moral approval to Slavery, and not till then.

Let those who say that God sanctions Slavery, *demonstrate* that its fundamental principles and legitimate results are in harmony with the law of love, with the essential and inalienable, civil, social, and religious rights of man, with the institutions of God's appointment, and with his prerogatives as sovereign Ruler of the world, and let them not represent God as they now do, as building with one hand what he overthrows with the other : thus dividing Jehovah against himself !

Since Slavery is essentially sinful, it follows that no instance of Slaveholding exists without involving some person or persons in guilt. Many conceivable, and some actual cases of Slaveholding have been presented to show that the relation may innocently exist. I will refer to one of the fairest specimens which has ever come to my knowledge. The Hon. Mr. Palfrey, of Mass. had some slaves fall to him, I believe, by inheritance. He took measures to bring them to the North where they became perfectly free. Now it is exultingly asked, where is his guilt as a slaveholder ? I cheerfully reply that I do not know that there was any guilt on his part in this case; but on the other hand, so far as I am acquainted with the facts, I have looked upon this transaction as a noble, a praiseworthy one. This then, it is replied, is a clear instance of Slaveholding without unrighteousness, and hence, without sin. Indeed ! Does it follow because a noble-minded man who is invested with the right of ownership by law over which he has no control, and who employs his authority for the *sole* purpose of restoring inalienable rights, wrongfully wrested from his fellows ; does it follow that they who originally deprived these men of their rights were also innocent ? They who reduced them to bondage and retained them in this condition are guilty, and not the one who at personal cost restored their rights to them. These Slaves were robbed of rights ; to the party who voluntarily did this, the guilt belongs ; and not to the one who made all necessary sacrifices to reinstate them in their rights. My father obtains a fraudulent title to your estate, and in time the deeds come into my possession. Under the full conviction that I have in equity no rightful title to the property, and that you have, I return it to you. Now because I did not wrong you, does it follow that *no one* did ? The common sense of the world holds that person guilty, who intelligently does wrong things ; but it imputes no blame to him who finds him-

self in a false position and employs the best and speediest means for his relief. Unless therefore, it can be conclusively shown that Slavery can exist without violating the rights of God or man, it cannot be proven to be innocent in a single case.

Since Slavery is essentially sinful, the doctrine of *immediate repentance* for this sin is strictly true, and should ever be insisted upon. On this point, Christian abolitionists hold sentiments in common with all evangelical Christians on other subjects. For the same reason that it is the duty of all men to abandon *all other sins at once*, it is the duty of all who are implicated in the guilt of slaveholding, at once to renounce this sin also. It is sometimes alleged that it is naturally impossible at once to repent of Slaveholding if it be a sin, and hence, immediate repentance cannot with propriety be urged as a duty. The above objection confounds the *act of repentance* with the *fruits of repentance*. A horse thief is bound *at once* to part with his disposition as a thief, though it may take days to return a stolen horse to its rightful owner. So of innumerable other instances which will readily occur to every reader. There is no doctrine which is correct in theory, wise or safe in practice, which does not imply the total and immediate abandonment of all known sin.

What is right in theory has ever been found to be pre-eminently safe in practice. Christian abolitionists have successfully challenged the world to produce a single instance from all history where immediate emancipation has been unsafe to life or to the great interests of Society.

As Slavery is essentially sinful, it is inconsistent for churches to fellowship this sin, while they dis-fellowship other sins. It is impossible to show that even professional gambling involves the violation of more Christian principles than does Slaveholding; or that it is attended with a more numerous retinue of direful evils. Yet that church would be deemed hopelessly apostate which should admit gamblers to its communion, to honorable places in its ecclesiastical bodies, and to distinguished offices in its boards of organized benevolence. It is well known that the advocates and supporters of a system which denies man's right to himself, to the fruits of his toil, a husband's right to his wife, a father's right to his children, a man's right to his Bible, and to worship God according to his own convictions of duty, are welcomed to sacred and honorable places in the leading denominations of this country. It is not fanaticism to maintain that this sin, whose name is Legion

should be expelled from the Christian church. It is fanaticism to cherish it there.

As Slavery is not only essentially sinful, but a sin of great magnitude and enormity, it follows that no Christian church can intelligently persist in fellowshiping it and still retain its character as a Church of Christ. It is universally agreed among evangelical Christians that no individual member of a Church can persist in any wicked course without loss of his character and standing as a Christian. The same principle applies to churches in their collective capacity. They are entitled to respect and esteem as Christian churches while they cordially embrace the fundamental doctrines of grace, and obey the fundamental principles of Christian morality, and no longer. Since we have seen that Slavery violates the fundamental principles of Christian morality, it follows that no individual, church, or ecclesiastical body, that intelligently persists in this sin, can with propriety be regarded or treated as Christian. We may learn from the testimony of a competent and distinguished witness how deeply the Southern churches, which are fellowshiped at the North, are implicated in this sin. Rev. Dr. Smylie of Mississippi, says :

"If SLAVERY be a sin, and advertising and apprehending slaves, with a view to restore them to their masters, is a direct violation of the divine law, and if the *buying, selling, or holding of a slave*, "FOR THE SAKE OF GAIN," is a heinous sin and scandal, then, verily, THREE-FOURTHS OF ALL THE EPISCOPALIANS, METHODISTS, BAPTISTS AND PRESBYTERIANS, IN ELEVEN STATES OF THE UNION, are of the Devil. They "hold" if they do not buy and sell slaves, and with few exceptions, they hesitate not to "apprehend and restore" runaway slaves, when in their power."

As the members of the Southern Churches do use "their neighbors' service without wages," and buy and sell the image of God, and in many instances their own brethren and sisters in church fellowship—the acknowledged members of Christ's body,—as if they were brutes, it follows that they have departed essentially from the Christian religion : and if they cannot be won back by light and love to the plainest elements of true religion, they should be disfellowshipped. Who can estimate the guilt of the Ministers, Churches, and Ecclesiastical bodies, who in their consciences believe Slavery to be a horrid crime, and still refuse to call and treat it as such, and thus neglect to warn the wicked of his ways ? Will not blood be required at their hands ?

Since American Slavery is not only plainly sinful, but is a sin of great magnitude and enormity, it follows that those

ministers, churches, and ecclesiastical bodies that intelligently persist in refusing to ascertain its true moral character, and thus "hide themselves from their own flesh, (Isaiah,) their suffering fellow countrymen, *do forfeit their christian character.* God has expressly commanded us '*not to hide ourselves from our own flesh.*' He will not permit us "to pass by on the other side" and thus escape responsibility. "I was an hungered," says the blessed Redeemer, as he drew the picture of the coming judgment, "and ye gave me no meat ; I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink ; a stranger and ye took me not in ; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." When the guilty company inquire, "When saw we Thee in such distress?" His reply is, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me." An intelligent refusal to assist our suffering fellow-men, when they are brought within the reach of our christian sympathy and aid, will as certainly exclude us from the Kingdom of God, as if we inflicted positive evil upon them. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." James 4: 17. So far, therefore, as churches persist in refusing to understand the moral nature of Slavery, and intelligently decline the employment of their powers and influence for the removal of this sin and curse, they conclusively show that they do not possess the spirit of Christ, and hence are none of His. Nor can they consistently complain if those who do love Christ and his suffering poor, withdraw all christian fellowship from them. It is evidently the duty of all who have light on this subject to labor kindly, prayerfully, and perseveringly, with their ministers and fellow-members who refuse or neglect to consider the sin of the master or the suffering of the Slave. They should not soon faint or grow weary in their labor of love. They should imitate the long suffering and patience of their Savior. But if, after protracted and christain efforts, they meet with disappointment, and can discern no reasonable prospect of amendment, then it becomes plainly their duty to withdraw from those who profess to love God, but in works deny Him. As such refuse obedience to the plain demands of the law of love, they prove themselves to be as unworthy of christian fellowship as if they denied the fundamental doctrines of divine grace.

Will not the true followers of Christ throughout the world unite against this sin and curse? It contemns the authority of Him whose name you hallow ; it repeals that law which diffuses holiness and bliss when it is obeyed ; prevents the glori-

ous Gospel from having "free course;" dooms to ignorance and brute degradation the image of God; dissolves the family state and licenses impurity; tempts its prostrate victims to idleness, improvidence, lying, and theft; involves Slaveholders in the sin of unrighteousness, oppression, extortion, and, since they *license impurity*, it involves them in its sin and guilt. In social life, it is a root of bitterness; in the commonwealth, it is weakness and poverty; it rests as a blight upon industry, and smites the soil with barrenness and decay. Its root is sin—its fruit, death. We therefore entreat every heir of Heaven to use his best efforts to extirpate this giant iniquity from off the earth. We may hear, think, feel, speak, write, preach, and act for God and against this direful evil. Our weapons are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. The motives which should prompt us to energetic exertions, are the infinite love of God, the grace of Christ, the salvation of the souls of Slaveholders and Slaves, a stain wiped from the christian religion, and general society relieved of one of the heaviest curses under which it has ever groaned. We repeat with solemn emphasis the question, Will not all the true friends of Christ unite against this common foe till it is no more?

I would kindly, but solemnly, remind Slaveholders that they, as well as others, are amenable to God's bar. Without holiness they cannot be saved. *Judgment and mercy*, as well as faith, are essential to salvation. They must "break every yoke" and "let the oppressed go free" if they would meet the requirement and approbation of God. They must cease to use their neighbor's services without wages, if they would be righteous.

May God lead them to "take away from the midst of them the yoke, the putting forth of the finger and speaking vanity; and incline them to draw out their soul to the hungry, and to satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall their light rise in obscurity, and their darkness be as the noon-day."

We have seen as we have progressed that Slavery is a plant which our Heavenly Father has not planted. The dews and smiles of Heaven refuse to descend upon it. Its roots are moistened with the tears and blood of hapless victims. Among its branches are heard unearthly sounds of woe—weeping and great lamentation. Gore issues from every opening pore; and tears exhale from every expanding leaf. Its branches, laden with the fruit of Sodom, bend to the earth. In no clime, by no culture, will it flourish except on the grave of civil and re-

ligious liberty. But I hear a voice—it is that of the Son of God, saying: “Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall *be rooted up!*” “Even so,” is the response of a disenthralled world.